

Message Text

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45

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12

ACDA-19 GAC-01 T-03 OMB-01 IO-12 DPW-01 SAJ-01 AID-20

IGA-02 TRSE-00 RSR-01 /140 W
----- 060341

R 151028 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1460

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

UNCLAS BANGKOK 4160

E. O.11652: N/ A

TAGS: PFOR, TH, AS

SUBJ: PRAPHAT REMARKS ON WHITLAM
NEWSWEEK INTERVIEW

REF : BANGKOK 3770

1. IN NEWS CONFERENCE MAR 15, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PRAPHAT RESPONDED TO QUESTIONS ON AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM'S NEWSWEEK INTERVIEW CONCERNING AMERICAN PRESENCE IN THAILAND. FLAVOR OF PRAPHAT'S COMMENTS WAS SUCH THAT IT WILL PROBABLY RECEIVE CONSIDERABLE PRESS PLAY. FOLLOWING IS USIS TRANSLATION OF TRANSCRIPT (COPY PROVIDED TO AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY).

2. BEGIN TEXT.

REPORTER: THE OBSERVATION MADE BY WHITLAM SHOULD BE ENDED BUT AN AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPER HAS PUBLISHED A SIMILAR VIEW. IS IT TRUE THAT THESE BASES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE POLICY OF NEUTRALITY OF THIS REGION NOT BEING AS SIGNIFICANT AS IT SHOULD BE?

PRAPAS: WHAT DO YOU EXPECT FROM THE VIEW OF ONE PERSON
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ONLY? BUT SINCE HE HAPPENS TO BE THE HEAD OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT IT LEADS TO SPECULATION THAT THAT MIGHT BE THE POLICY OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, EVEN THOUGH HE IS THE HEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT, THERE ARE MANY OTHER PERSONS IN THAT GOVERNMENT. IT IS WHITLAM' S VIEW ONLY. DON' T WORRY ABOUT IT. IT IS A MATTER THAT CONCERNS US, THAT WE HAVE TO WORRY OVER. WHAT BUSINESS IS IT OF WHITLAM TO WORRY OVER OUR COUNTRY? I FEEL THAT THAT STATEMENT WAS MADE BY THE HEAD OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT BECAUSE HE WANTS TO SEPARATE AUSTRALIA FROM HAVING TO ACCEPT ANY RESPONSIBILITY JOINTLY IN THE ASIAN CONTINENT. WRITE THIS UP CORRECTLY. I FEEL THAT WHITLAM MADE THAT STATEMENT IN ORDER TO SEPARATE AUSTRALIA FROM RESPONSIBILITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. AUSTRALIA IS ONE OF THE COUNTRIES IN THE GROUP OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES THAT ARE SEATO MEMBER NATIONS, AND THIS STATEMENT HE MADE SOUNDS AS IF HE WILL DRAW APART. THAT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE. I MYSELF AM NOT ABLE TO KNOW WHETHER WHITLAM' S FEELINGS ARE STILL THOSE OF A FARANG (WESTERN FOREIGNER), THUS NOT ENABLING HIM TO UNDERSTAND THE UNITY AND SOLIDARITY OF NATIONS LIVING TOGETHER IN THIS SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGION. LET ME COMMENT ON A PROMINENT PERSON TODAY. (LAUGHTER)

REPORTER: HAS THE AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR EVER PRESENTED ANY DOCUMENT OR ANY FORMAL VIEW EXPRESSED BY WHITLAM TO OUR GOVERNMENT?

PRAPAS: I DON' T KNOW. SO FAR AS I KNOW I HAVEN' T SEEN ANY. HE STILL HAS THE VIEW OF A FARANG. FORMERLY I BELIEVED THAT AUSTRALIA WAS A WHITE ASIAN, BUT AFTER HEARING THIS STATEMENT MADE BY WHITLAM, I FEEL THAT HE IS STILL A EUROPEAN, THAT HE IS NOT A WHITE ASIAN. I AM SPEAKING IN EASY LANGUAGE WHICH SHOULD BE EASIER TO UNDERSTAND. REPORTER: YES, SIR. END TEXT. UNGER

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